

## In this issue:

5-Year Strategic Plan ♦ Report to Grand Jury ♦ Autumn Outreach

### 5-Year Strategic Plan

In August, ombudsman staff worked together to reinforce the guiding principles of our organization and to develop goals for the next five years. This strategic plan will guide our work and help us ensure that we achieve the vision:

*The Alaska State Ombudsman promotes fair and efficient government through objective inquiry and well-reasoned recommendations for meaningful, measurable improvement.*

We have **8 goals** for improving how the Office of the Ombudsman operates:

Goal 1: All Alaskans are aware of the role, work, and value of the Alaska State Ombudsman.

Goal 2: The Alaska State Ombudsman provides welcoming, accessible, and safe environments for people to come for help with their problems.

Goal 3: Ombudsman investigations are conducted and reported in a timely fashion.

Goal 4: Ombudsman recommendations are tracked for implementation and evaluated for effectiveness.

Goal 5: Internal ombudsman operations are efficient and effective.

Goal 6: The Alaska State Ombudsman has capacity to investigate complex, technical, and systemic complaints.

Goal 7: State agencies appreciate the role of the Alaska State Ombudsman and the value that it offers to public systems.

Goal 8: The Alaska State Ombudsman is a source of expertise and technical assistance on complaint resolution policies and procedures.

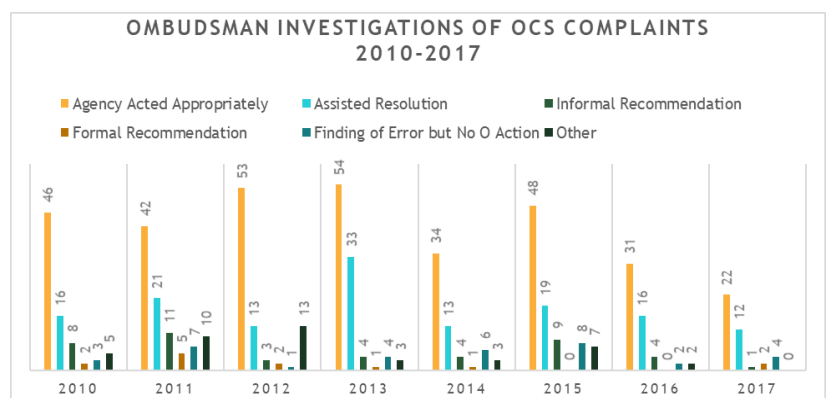
Learn more about our strategies for achieving our goals and indicators for measuring our performance [here](#).

### Ombudsman Report in Response to Grand Jury Referral, OCS

Late last year, the Anchorage Grand Jury referred a question it had received about whether the Office of Children's Services was "complying with its statutory duties" to the Ombudsman for review. In response, the Ombudsman issued a report providing:

- ♦ Data on all complaints about OCS investigated since 2010;
- ♦ Discussion of persistent issues presented by people over time; and
- ♦ Ombudsman recommendations made since 2010, and how they compare to recommendations made by other organizations with an interest in the child protection system.

The Ombudsman reviewed all 538 complaints about OCS investigated between January 1, 2010 and June 30, 2017. Of these, 35% included problems related to relative and foster placement decisions, including Indian Child Welfare Act placements; 30% included problems related to visitation; 16% included issues of investigation, or lack of investigation, of reports of child abuse and/or neglect; and 10% were from people who said they had not received notice of a hearing, case conference, right to appeal, decision regarding placement, etc.



In more than half of the complaints investigated, OCS staff acted according to law, regulation, policy and/or procedure. The majority of complaints were resolved with brief assistance or with informal recommendations from ombudsman staff. Read more about the formal recommendations made by the Ombudsman in the [full report](#).

### Autumn Outreach

The Office of the Ombudsman is excited to have its first exhibitor booth at the [Alaska Federation of Natives Convention](#) October 19-21 at the Dena'ina Center. Stop by, meet the Ombudsman and our Anchorage staff, and learn about our work on behalf of Alaskans. We'll also be in **Fairbanks October 23-25** for the [Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness Conference](#) and to meet with local social services providers, state agency staff, and community members. The Ombudsman will be at the Fairbanks LIO for intake if people have complaints (date/time TBD). Call Linda Ritchey at 269-5290 for more information.

Have ideas for how we can better engage with Alaskans? Email them to us at [Ombudsman@akleg.gov](mailto:Ombudsman@akleg.gov).